



FAMILY AFFAIR

Tractors pull generations together

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press



Photos by Matusz Perkowski/Capital Press
ABOVE: Garden tractors await their chance to compete at a tractor pull.

TOP: A competitor pulls a truck modified to be a sled at tractor pull competition at BiZi Farms north of Vancouver, Wash. Tractor pull events have separate classes based on weight, as well as whether a tractor is a stock model or has been modified to improve its pulling capacity.

Tractor pulling is the rare motorsport whose competitors needn't worry about breaking the speed limit, even in a school zone. But to complain about the maximum speed of 12 mph would be to miss the point. When you're pulling thousands of pounds across a dirt track, "12 mph does not sound fast, but it takes an enormous amount of horsepower to go that fast," said Zack Peterson, secretary of the Oregon Tractor Pullers nonprofit. Though success at tractor pulling is measured by distance and weight, it'd be an oversimplification to say the contest is only about raw power. Harnessing that power takes knowledge that's often passed from generation to generation, like a family heirloom. Many tractor pullers teach their children mechanical skills they themselves acquired while working alongside a parent. "The most important thing is they're preserving a part of our agricultural heritage," said Paul Pfinster of Keizer, Ore., who officiates at the events. "It's not just an act of preservation, it's an act of training the next generation."



Matusz Perkowski/Capital Press
Steve Gleason and his daughter, Cora, rebuilt a 1952 John Deere Model A tractor together, with which they compete in tractor pull events. The mechanical skill involved in tractor pulling is often passed down through the generations.

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UPCOMING TRACTOR PULLS

• Tractor pulling is predominantly a summertime spectacle that can often be enjoyed at county fairs and other community gatherings. The Oregon Tractor Pullers nonprofit also typically organizes several events throughout the season. The group's Fall Barbecue Pull is scheduled for Aug. 27

at BiZi Farms near Vancouver, Wash. Attendance for spectators is free but competitors are charged entree fees that vary for members and non-members. For more information about the organization's rules, costs, events and pull results, visit www.oregontractorpullers.org.

• Another opportunity to compete or watch tractor pulling will be at the Sublimity Harvest Festival, which is scheduled for Sept. 9-11 in Sublimity, Ore. More information about the festival can be found online at www.sublimityharvestfest.com or by calling 503-769-3579.

Grain exports from Port of Portland decrease 50% due to drought



Matusz Perkowski/Capital Press
A dry bulk vessel is loaded with wheat at the Columbia Grain facility in Portland, Ore., bound for South Korea. Grain volumes at the Port of Portland, where the export facility is located, have fallen 50% due to lingering drought impacts from last year.

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

Last year's drought has cast a long shadow on wheat exports from the Port of Portland, whose grain handling volume has fallen by 50% in 2022. "You can't ship what you don't have," said Kurt Haarmann, senior vice president of the grain division for Columbia Grain. The 2021 drought's impact on production in the northern U.S. wheat-growing tier was the most severe seen in more than 30 years, Haarmann said. The company's export facility at the port's Terminal 5 is more wheat-dependent than others in the

area, which handle more corn and soybeans, and so was particularly hard-hit by the dry weather, he said. Total tonnage handled by the port's marine division has declined more than 5% in the current fiscal year, with grain cargo seeing the biggest decrease of nearly 50%, according to a recent report. Haarmann said the drought's effects have been felt throughout the farm economy in wheat-producing areas. Crop insurance and disaster assistance from the federal government helped mitigate some of the harm to farmers, but reduced production affects other businesses along the supply chain as well, he said. "That ripples through all those

communities because ag dollars get spent time and time again," Haarmann said. Typically, drought impacts are localized, but the lack of moisture in 2021 extended all the way from the Northwest to the Dakotas, he said. It's likely the region has lost some export market share to Canada and Australia due to the lack of available wheat for Asian markets, Haarmann said. "When we got to the tail end of the crop year, the supplies were really tapped out," he said, referring to the marketing season for last year's crop, which ended with this year's summer harvest.

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Paper calls for fewer cattle, more wolves in the 'rewild' West

By DON JENKINS
Capital Press

Some 110,000 square miles of federal land in the West should be closed to cattle and restocked with wolves and beavers, according to a paper by Oregon State University scientists and others. Appearing Aug. 9 in the journal *BioScience*, the paper identifies 11 blocks of federal land spread over 11 states for a "Western rewilding network." The paper's 20 signers include six OSU scientists, professors from other schools, conservationists and former U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service director Daniel Ashe. They propose reducing the amount of federal land grazed in the West by 29% — equal to the size of Nevada — and also limiting logging, mining, oil and gas drilling and off-road vehicles. Once rid of "troublesome non-native species," the network would advance President Biden's executive order to conserve 30% of the U.S. by



Capital Press File
A new paper proposes taking cattle off some publicly owned land and putting wolves and beavers on it.

2030, the authors said. "Although our proposal may at first blush appear controversial or even quixotic, we believe that ultra ambitious action is required," they wrote. R-CALF USA CEO Bill Bullard

said the proposal ignores the rights of ranchers and the importance of widespread food production that can withstand regional catastrophes. "The American West is vitally important as a protein source, beef and lamb, and is ideally suited for

protein production," he said. "It is a shortsighted and unrealistic proposal that does not consider the economic and social impacts it would have, uprooting entire communities that are valuable contributors to the economic welfare of this nation," Bullard said. The proposal identifies blocks of federally owned land in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, California, Nevada, Montana, Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico, Wyoming and Utah for the rewilding network. The network would include Olympic National Park, and the North and South Cascades in Washington. Other blocks in the network would include the Blue, Klamath and Sierra Cascade mountains in Oregon; the Cisca Nevada mountains in California and the Northern Rockies in Idaho. The proposal intertwines reducing cattle on federal land and wolf recovery. The paper argues that

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